

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109687

FOL REPEAT OF SINGAPORE 1956 TO SECSTATE INFO MANILA CANBERRA

BANGKOK KUALA LUMPUR JAKARTA CINCPAC MAY 09

QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1956

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, VS, SN

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. IF TALKS IN WASHINGTON WITH P.M. LEE HAVE MADE ANY DENT ON REFUGEE QUESTION, THERE IS NO INDICATION OF IT HERE. ICEM REP STEWART ARRIVED SINGAPORE MAY 9 AND MET WITH SENIOR MINDEF OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF REFUGEE PROBLEMS, TAY SEOW HUAH, WHO ACTS UNDER DIRECT PERSONAL SUPERVISION OF ACTING P.M. GOH. STEWART SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED EMBASSY THAT IN POLITE BUT COOL CONVERSATION TAY SAID REFUGEE SITUATION FULLY UNDER CONTROL, ICEM SERVICES NOT REQUIRED, REFUGEES WOULD BE REQUESTED TO LEAVE IN FEW DAYS AS SOON AS SHIPS REPAIRED AND PROVISIONING COMPLETED (AUSTRALIAN PRESS SOURCE HAS HEARD FROM ONE MINDEF OFFICIAL THAT REFUGEE SHIPS WILL BE FORCED TO LEAVE ON MAY 12 OR 13).

2. STEWART, WHO HAD ALREADY MET WITH EMBASSY AND AUSTRALIAN HICOM OFFICIALS, URGED GOS TO PERMIT REFUGEES TO COME ASHORE
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SO THAT VARIOUS EMBASSIES AND HICOMS COULD DETERMINE THEIR ELI-

GIBILITY FOR ADMITTANCE TO THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. HE NOTED AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS CERTAIN THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD SHIPS WHO WOULD QUALIFY FOR A VISA IF HICOM COULD ONLY HAVE ACCESS TO THEM.

3. TAY SAID NO ONE BUT GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL WOULD BE ALLOWED ACCESS TO SHIPS AND THAT NO ONE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO COME ASHORE UNLESS A PARTICULAR EMBASSY, HICOM OR INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCY WERE PREPARED TO GIVE ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE IN WRITING THAT THESE REFUGEES WOULD LEAVE SINGAPORE AND ENTER A PARTICULAR COUNTRY. TAY SAID TAIWAN HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT 20 VIETNAMESE OF CHINESE ETHNIC ORIGIN AND U.S. HAD AGREED TO RECEIVE A NUMBER OF ORPHANS. ONLY OTHERS ALLOWED ASHORE AT QUARANTINE STATION WERE OFF DISABLED VESSELS AND WOULD BE RETURNED TO THEIR SHIPS AS SOON AS THEY WERE REPAIRED. STEWART COMMENTED THAT MOST GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE UNWILLING TO MAKE ANY GUARANTEE IN ADVANCE OF PROCESSING.

4. STEWART SAID TAY WAS AWARE THAT UNHCR REP (KADRY) FROM BANGKOK WOULD ARRIVE IN SINGAPORE ON MAY 10, AND NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO TALK WITH HIM. STEWART'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT TAY WOULD RECEIVE KADRY POLITELY, HEAR HIM OUT AND THEN ADVISE HIM THAT UNLESS HE WAS CARRYING ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE OF RESETTLEMENT IN HIS POCKET, HE WOULD BE TOLD THERE WAS NO NEED FOR HIS SERVICES. CRONK UNQTE KISSINGER

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